

2016 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE INDIAN MOUNTAIN C&H ALLOTMENT

INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions are a guide for implementing grazing management activities on the **Indian Mountain C&H Allotment** for the 2016 grazing season. This plan was developed with participation of the livestock permittees at the Annual Operating Instruction meeting held at the Council District Office on April 19, 2016. The interdisciplinary resource personnel and livestock permittees who participated in development of this plan were Permittees; Weldon & Ric Branch, Steve Sutton, Jim & Carol Wolfe, Marlin Wolfe, Joe Holmes, and RJ Holmes, Forest Service personnel; Rangeland Management Specialists Andy Bumgarner, Jennifer McMorris, and District Ranger Greg Lesch.

These instructions are a guideline for grazing management. It is necessary to contact the Forest Service if there are any changes or additions to these instructions through out the grazing season. Refer to Part 2 of your term grazing permit for general terms and conditions which apply to these Annual Operating Instructions.

Permitted Use			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Wolfe, James N & Carol R	Indian Mountain	282 cow/calf pairs	7/1-10/15
Sutton Livestock		157 cow/calf pairs	
Sutton Livestock		108 cow/calf pairs	
Sutton Livestock		66 cow/calf pairs	
Branch, Weldon E & Virginia I		592 cow/calf pairs	
Weldon Ric & Shirley Ann Branch		118 cow/calf pairs	
J.W. Holmes & Sons		128 cow/calf pairs	
Robert J. Holmes		91 cow/calf pairs	
Marlin Wolfe		180 cow/calf pairs	
Marlin Wolfe		36 cow/calf pairs	


Permitted Livestock Brands:

Wolfe, James N or Carol R - **JW** RRC

- Wolfe, Robert D or Stacey - **W** LHC

Sutton, Steven B or Gary F or Sutton Livestock Co. INC - **SU** LHC

Branch, Weldon or Irene - **key** RHC


Branch, Weldon Ric or Shirley Ann -  RHC

- Branch, Weldon Ross -  RHC

Holmes, John W & Sons -  RRC

Holmes, Robert J -  RHC or  RHC

Wolfe, Marlin or Jeanne -  RRC

- Wolfe, Brock -  RHC

2016 Authorized Use			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Wolfe, James N & Carol R	Indian Mountain	282 cow/calf pairs	7/1-10/15
Sutton Livestock		157 cow/calf pairs	
Sutton Livestock		108 cow/calf pairs 6 Pvt, 156 Potlatch	
Sutton Livestock		66 cow/calf pairs	
Branch, Weldon E & Virginia I		532 cow/calf pairs 15 Pvt 30 State	
Weldon Ric & Shirley Ann Branch		118 Non-Use for personal convenience	
J.W. Holmes & Sons		128 cow/calf pairs	
Robert J. Holmes		91 cow/calf pairs	
Marlin Wolfe		180 cow/calf pairs	
Marlin Wolfe		36 cow/calf pairs	

COMPLIANCE

This AOI is made part of the Term Grazing Permit consistent with Part 1, item 3, and Part 2, item 8(a). Situations may develop during the grazing seasons which require changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact the District Ranger and obtain approval before initiating changes or deviating from these instructions. The season of use is especially dependent upon weather conditions (annual precipitation) which influences annual forage production and range readiness. The District Ranger's authority to modify term grazing permitted use is further described in Part 2, Section 8 (b) & (c) of your permit.

Refer to your term grazing permit, part 2 (general terms and conditions) and part 3 (special terms and conditions) for a list of general and specific management practices required by the permittee.

All livestock feed or straw brought on to the forest is required to be certified weed free.

PREVIOUS YEAR GRAZING RESULTS

2015 Grazing Rotation			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Wolfe, James N & Carol R	Indian Mountain	282 cow/calf pairs	7/1-10/15
Sutton Livestock		157 cow/calf pairs	
Sutton Livestock		108 cow/calf pairs 6 Pvt, 156 Potlatch	
Sutton Livestock		66 cow/calf pairs	
Branch, Weldon E & Virginia I		269 cow/calf pairs Non-Use for resource protection of 323 cow/calf pairs 15 Pvt 30 State	
Weldon E, Weldon R & Virginia I Branch		106 cow/calf pairs	
J.W. Holmes & Sons		128 cow/calf pairs	
Robert J. Holmes		91 cow/calf pairs	
Marlin Wolfe		180 cow/calf pairs	
Marlin Wolfe		36 cow/calf pairs	

2015 Utilization			
Area	Date	Upland/Riparian	Percent Utilization
Sheep Creek Bull Trout Exclosure #1	10/13/15	Riparian	5%
Anderson Creek Bull Trout Exclosure #2	10/15/15	Riparian	3% (14 in. SH)
Little Weiser Bull Trout Exclosure #2	10/15/15	Riparian	3% (18 in. SH)
Mill Creek Summit (Old Ranger Station)	11/02/15	Riparian	69%

BILLING

Grazing fees of \$ 2.11/HM must be paid before livestock are authorized to enter the National Forest. Payment must be made to: USDA Forest Service, c/o Citibank, P.O. Box 301550, Los Angeles, California 90030-1550. The Council District Office must receive confirmation from the Citibank Lockbox that payment has been made prior to cattle entering the Forest. Permittees can now pay their bills with a credit card at Forest Service offices that have the Point of Sale System (POSS). Offices with the POSS on the Payette National Forest include Weiser, Council, New Meadows, and McCall Ranger Districts.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

2016 Grazing Rotation			
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James and Carol Wolfe's cattle will turn out in the Mill Creek area. Part of them will be moved down the Four Bit Road to the old logging road that heads back to the Lost Fork area and part will be taken on to the old Sheep Creek road, and pushed on to the top by August 15. The rest of the cattle will be moved up the Loop road and graze that area and be on top by August 15. Approximately October 1-5 cattle will be gathered and brought back over the top and down to the Mill Creek and Grizzly Creek areas and removed from the Forest by October 15.

Branch will turn out cattle on Smith Ridge, Grouse Creek, Little Weiser River, and Horsethief Basin. Cattle will move through Cougar Basin, Cold Spring Ridge, Mica Saddle, Weiser River slope, and Anderson Creek. Any cattle remaining will be gathered and moved up around August 1. Around 8/15 cattle in the head waters of the Little Weiser and Anderson Creek will be pushed North and East to the State section lease. By October 1 cattle will be started off the east side of the mountain and moved off the allotment by October 15.

RJ Holmes will turn out of the Legg property adjacent to the allotment and graze Long Gulch at the beginning of the season, until allowable utilization is reached. Cattle will then be moved towards the head of North Greys Creek and the head of Fall Creek. Cattle will then start working their way north towards the Middle Fork of the Weiser River. Approximately August 7th cattle will reach the Middle Fork of the Weiser River and meet up with Steve Sutton's cattle. They will follow the rotation with Steve's cattle from this time until approximately October 1st. At this point cattle will start home and be removed from the allotment by October 15.

Holmes will turn out in South Grays Creek, and move from King Hill Creek to Indian Mountain Lookout. July 25 the cattle will be moved to Mica Ridge and the head of Little Weiser River. August 15 cattle will be moved to Upper Hubbard Basin. September 30 the cattle will be started back down to Grays Creek and King Hill Creek, and off the allotment by October 15. Avoid

significant use in the Telephone Gulch and South Grays Creek area because of young tree plantations which are not fenced and have had past high utilization.

Sutton Livestock will run 156 cow/calf pairs permitted by Potlatch on Potlatch property within the Middle Fork Weiser River area. This Potlatch property is located on both sides of the Middle Fork Weiser River and located within the Council and Indian Mountain Allotments. These cattle are not permitted on NFS lands; they are above and beyond the permitted livestock numbers. The FS recognizes that the Potlatch property is not fenced and is intermingled within FS lands however, it is imperative you prevent your private land permitted livestock from trespassing on the Council and Indian Mountain Allotments as much as possible. Please work with the Minks on the Council Mountain Allotment to keep livestock out of new plantations.

Sutton Livestock (former Casa Del Norte permit) the 157 pair associated with this permit has been permanently moved from the south end of the allotment to the north end. It was agreed to by all Indian Mountain permittees in the 5/8/2012 AOI meeting that this permit would trade use areas with the old Schwenkfelder permit recently purchased by Marlin Wolfe. This will simplify both permittees livestock management in the allotment by allowing Steve to combine all of his herds into one use area and allowing Marlin to graze closer to his base of operation. Steve currently has all of the Potlatch ground on the north end of the allotment leased and runs two other forest permits on the north end as well. Steve will now graze all three of his forest permits and his Potlatch lease on the north end of the allotment.

On July 1st **Sutton** cattle will be put on in two groups; first to the beaver ponds in the Big Fall Creek drainage, second to the Hyser Place area in the Little Fall Creek drainage. On or around July 20th, cattle will be pushed to Mica Creek and Corral Creek. Around mid August, cattle will be pushed to Big Cr., Little Cr., Jungle Cr., and top of mountain. Starting around Oct. 1st, cattle will be pushed down and off allotment toward the fence near Fall Creek and North Grays Creek by Oct. 15th.

Marlin Wolfe (former SS Cattle and Bob Schwenkfelder permit) the 216 pair associated with these permits will be grazed on the South end of the allotment in the use area currently used by Jim and Carol Wolfe. They will replace Steve Suttons 157 pair (former Casa Del Norte permit) which has been moved to the north end of the allotment. It needs to be noted that when the Potlatch permits were combined into one (Steve Suttons Potlatch lease) which is now run solely on Potlatch ground on the north end of the allotment, all forest permits lost some cattle. Previous to this all Indian Mountain forest grazing permits had a certain number of cattle attached to them that were associated with the Potlatch ground. The three permits that ran on the South end lost a total of 43 C/C pairs. Therefore, the south end should have the capacity to stock Marlin's 216 pair permit.

This was authorized for the first time during the 2012 grazing season and all forest plan grazing standards have been met since that time. It will be authorized for a fifth year as a trial, to continue to observe if these additional cattle can be grazed in the south end use area while still achieving proper management of the area. Additional riding will still be necessary to train cattle to use the area. Cattle may also still have to be trained to graze areas not traditionally utilized in this use area. All grazing standards still apply to this use area and if utilization levels are reached before October 15th some or all cattle may have to be removed from the allotment. If it is determined that

this is too many cattle for the area then Marlin will have to move some of them back to the north end of the allotment

Cattle will turn out in the Mill Creek area. They will graze higher on Four Bit Creek and up to the top of the mountain by August 15. They will then be moved back over the top by approximately October 1-5 and down to Mill Creek and Grizzly Creek until October 15.

All dates listed in this AOI are based on our best estimate for the current grazing season. The season of use dates are tentative and may vary according to range conditions and utilization levels within the use areas. Move dates will vary and may be shortened or extended as conditions warrant.

Notify the Forest Service at least 5 days before you turn onto the allotment of when and where turnout will occur so that a count can be made if desired.

STANDARDS AND GUIDES

The following are specific utilization standards and guidelines from the July 2003 Forest Plan. Utilization percentages are by weight and are the maximum allowed.

RAST01 - Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture shall not exceed the values shown at the end of the growing season. Variation in utilization standards in order to achieve specific vegetative management objectives shall occur with a site-specific or project-level decision according to direction in FSM 1922.5.

a) Riparian Areas: Maximum 45 percent use or retain a minimum 4 inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first.

b) Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Early season or season long pastures – 40 percent use. Vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions, or late season pastures – 50 percent use.

In cattle allotments where riparian area restoration is an objective (Upper Little Weiser River and Anderson Creek subwatersheds), grazing systems should be designed to incorporate the following parameters where appropriate (RAGU02):

a. Provide residual vegetative cover (at least 6 inches of hydric vegetation) either through regrowth or rest treatments for at least 75 percent of the years in a rotation cycle.

b. Reduce the duration of riparian area grazing periods where needed. Grazing period reduction may be especially needed in the fall where riparian deciduous woody species are an important riparian vegetation component.

c. Design grazing periods to take advantage of favorable seasonal livestock dispersal behavior (examples: spring use of uplands, due to wet riparian conditions, late fall upland use, due to cold temperatures, poor dispersal during “hot” season).

d. Incorporate sufficient growing season rest to provide good vigor, physiological needs, and regeneration of all riparian plants.

e. Where deciduous trees and shrubs are important in the composition, modify the frequency of grazing periods, reduce the grazing duration, or reduce grazing intensity to levels that provide for recovery/maintenance of healthy diverse trees and shrubs.

The Little Weiser River and Middle Fork Weiser River are listed on the Idaho State 303(d) impaired water quality list and have been identified in the Forest Plan in the Management Area 3

Weiser River Objective 0318 for improvement of water quality. **Please be aware, on these two rivers you are required to maintain a 6 inch residual stubble height on hydric greenline species to be measured at the end of the growing season, not the end of the grazing season.**

The following standards apply to the Upper Little Weiser, Anderson Creek and Sheep Creek sub watersheds. Written in the August 28, 2008 Council Mountain and Indian Mountain Allotments Amendment to the Biological Assessment for the Weiser River Watershed, utilization standards will be changed from the 1999 Biological Opinion (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1999) inside and outside of the exclosures to match the Payette Forest Plan standard (RAST01) of 45% utilization in riparian areas.*

*The standard being replaced was “[r]esidual stubble heights within riparian areas shall be at least 6 inches for key representative riparian graminoid species (grasses, rushes, sedges, etc.) at the time cattle are removed from a unit. No more than 30% use by weight on upland type grasses which occur on floodplains or no more than 40% use where stream temperatures are functioning adequately shall be permitted. No more than 25% of the annual growth (i.e., of current season’s leaders, not existing plant material) of woody species shall be browsed. Permitted utilization levels may differ from these levels if restoration to acceptable conditions is necessary for a given riparian site.”

When an area reaches allowable use levels the cattle will be moved and kept from returning to that area. If cattle are in the final area of the rotation sequence and utilization standards are reached, then they will have to be removed from the allotment.

In the event a designated mitigation measure fails to protect a species listed under the Endangered Species Act, a change in the authorized grazing activity will occur. If proper utilization levels are reached, then livestock will be moved to the next grazing area or off the forest. If livestock grazing does not comply with the terms and conditions of these Annual Operating Instructions, then the Forest Service policy and procedures dealing with administrative permit actions will be followed.

Livestock in units outside the season of use or on an allotment other than the one permitted, is a violation of the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit. The Forest Service recognizes that a 100% clean pasture or allotment is not always achievable by the scheduled move or off date however; adequate effort by the Permittees is expected to achieve that.

IMPROVEMENTS

All range improvements must be maintained prior to turning livestock into the unit scheduled for use. If an existing range improvement has been properly maintained but requires reconstruction, a cooperative effort can be made between the Forest Service and permittee to reconstruct the development, depending on material availability. Those projects to which the permittee contributes normally receive higher priority for funding by the Forest Service.

Maintenance of spring developments is vitally important to proper livestock distribution in the grazing allotment. If you are aware of spring developments that require reconstruction or extensive maintenance, please discuss this with your Rangeland Management Specialist prior to starting any work.

2016 range improvement projects include:

- Little Weiser Spring should be cleared for reconstruction by this spring/summer
- Lower Anderson spring (need site GPS'd to start NEPA process). Jennifer will try to coordinate location of this development with permittees as time permits.

Per consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on April 14, 2006, it was agreed the permittees would have the exclosures on the big meadow in the Little Weiser headwaters (LW EXC 2) and both sites on Anderson Creek (AN EXC 1 & 2) set up by the on-date of July 1, or as soon as the snow banks have melted off to allow set-up.

The permittees are required to set up and ride the bull trout spawning habitat exclosures daily to maintain, repair, keep cattle out of and/or remove cattle from, beginning August 15th. The permittees are responsible for these exclosures. The FS is responsible for maintenance of the bottom exclosure (SH EXC 3) located on Sheep Creek. The minimum charge recommended by the fence charger manufacturer for detouring animals is 2,000 volts. This will be the minimum standard for charges on the Bull Trout fence exclosures. All parties recognize that tester readings can have large ranges of differences in measurements.

For a list of assigned maintenance of structural improvements as well as maintenance standards see part 3 of your term grazing permit.

PERMITTEE/RIDER INSTRUCTIONS

Part of good cattle management is riding to assure proper cattle distribution. In particular we want to insure that the stream banks and meadows aren't over used. These riparian areas are considered key areas and will be monitored. When an area has reached maximum allowable use levels cattle will be removed from that area and kept from returning. Keeping cattle off select areas and in areas of less use serves to prolong the time cattle can expect to stay in an area.

If cattle are in the final area of the rotation sequence and utilization standards are reached, then they will have to be removed from the allotment.

Salting

Salting is restricted to the following:

- No less than ¼ mile from water, and not be placed in meadow bottoms where possible. Exceptions to this must be cleared and approved by the District Ranger prior to placing the salt.
- Placed at a minimum distance of 100 yards from open roads and out of sight from roads if possible.
- Should be moved yearly unless present salt ground is located in a rocky area where no vegetation grows.
- Unconsumed salt will be removed from the site.
- ¼ mile from timber plantations with trees less than 15 feet tall. If this can't be accomplished, the District Range and Reforestation personnel will work with you to find acceptable locations.

REQUIRED REPORTING

We are requiring you to report actual use information for each unit grazed because we are required to report this grazing use to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). This information is also very important when conducting future allotment analysis. Any format is acceptable. If you would like a Forest Service form or have any questions about what information to include in the Actual Use Report, please call Andy at 208-253-0114 or 208-549-4262. **Actual Use needs to be turned in no later than December 31, 2016.**

INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING

Turnout will not occur prior to range readiness. Range readiness is measured by soil moisture and plant growth. Soils may be damp but should be firm to avoid excessive compaction due to livestock. Perennial grass species must be a minimum of 6 inches in height. Arrowleaf balsamroot should be in bloom or past bloom.

Allotment/pasture inspections will be performed periodically throughout the grazing season by Forest Service Personnel. Livestock distribution, correct livestock location, numbers and identification, structural improvement maintenance, and utilization levels will be evaluated during these site visits. If you wish to accompany Forest Service Personnel on these inspections please contact the Rangeland Management Specialist.

COORDINATION & COOPERATION

Cooperation with neighboring permittees is encouraged, however if there are problems occurring that cannot be settled let your Rangeland Management Specialist know so that steps can be taken to correct the problems.

In accordance with Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2255.1 all grazing permittees are required to conform to livestock laws and quarantine regulations of the State and Secretary of Agriculture while their livestock are on Forest Service administered land. Forest officers shall not allow livestock under quarantine to enter Forest Service administered lands until the quarantine is lifted or until the hold order is released. Grazing permits may be suspended or cancelled, in accordance with FSM 2204, for failure to comply with such laws or with any approved special rules of a recognized livestock association.

All bulls required by Idaho state law to be trichomoniasis (trich) tested shall have a current trich test prior to entering Forest Service lands. Bulls that are to be turned out on public grazing allotments are required to be tested for Trichomoniasis by April 15 of each Trichomoniasis testing season or forty-five (45) days prior to turnout on a public grazing allotment, whichever occurs first. All bulls will be trich tagged for the current trich year prior to entering Forest Service lands.

Please review the AOI for consistency with our discussion at the annual meeting, if correct sign and return it to Andy.

GREG LESCH
District Ranger

DATE

Wolfe, James N & Carol R
Permittee

DATE

Sutton Livestock
Permittee

DATE

Branch, Weldon E & Virginia I
Permittee

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